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SERMON

Against

PERSECUTION:

PREACHED

March 26, 1682, when the Brief for the Persecuted PROTESTANTS in *France* was read in the Parish Church of *Shapwicke* in *Dorsetshire*.

Then Published, to put a Stop to false Reports:

And now Republished; with a Brief Relation of the Prosecutions against the Author in the Ecclesiastical Court, and at the Assizes, for the said *Sermon*, and for his *Plea for Moderation towards Dissenters*, &c.

By SAMUEL BOLDE, *Rector of Steeple in Dorsetshire.*

L O N D O N:

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THE
MAGAZINE

PERSECUTION

REACHED

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To the READER.

READER,

IT hath been my constant Course for some Months, to preach every Sunday, either on the whole Epistle for the Day, or some part of it. And finding I was commanded in the Brief for the Persecuted Protestants in France, (which was brought me in the Week before the 4th Sunday in Lent) to publish it the next Sunday; I found there was no need to alter my wanted Course, in order to my pitching on a Subject which might suit with that Occasion. The famous Dr. Patrick, in his Epistle Dedicatory before his Sermon Preached before the Lord Mayor, &c. the 2^d Sunday after Trinity 1680. ascribes his being directed to the Subject he then preached on, not so much to his own Prudence, as a kind of Divine Providence; because having observed this same Course that Year, he did not on that Occasion go out of his Way to meet with a fitting Argument. Whether People will put the same Construction on this Discourse or not, I neither know nor care. But I think I may truly say, I have discoursed on this Text, with a Freedom which becomes a Christian, and particularly a true Son of the Church of England.

It may be, some who pretend to the Church, will take Exception at this Sermon; for there are some so shallow, and of so short Discourse, they cannot understand how a Man can except against their violent Proceedings against some Dissenters, and yet be himself a thorough Conformist. Indeed it is not of any moment what such may either say or think; but yet to give them some Satisfaction, if they ever happen to be favoured with any sober and lucid Intervals, I will, amongst the many Instances I might mention for this end, offer these few to their Consideration.

1. I could never yet understand that Conformity did oblige any Man to lay aside all Bowels of Compassion. Nay, I am sure, to Convince and Satisfy Men with Reason, and by Humility, Gentleness, and Meekness, is most Christian, and tends most to the Honour of particular Persons, and whole Churches. How much of Fierceness and Violence there is in any Party, especially if countenanced by the Principles of that Perswasion, so much there is of some Infernal and Devilish Mixture in it.

2. Those who do generally Decry and Prosecute Dissenters with greatest Passion and Virulence, are greatest Strangers unto them. They usually know no more of them, than they learn from some false and scandalous Observer or other.

3. They are commonly ignorant of the State of the Controversy betwixt us and the Dissenters. The true Reason why Judicious and Thinking Conformists do use those particular Ceremonies

To the READER.

nies which are enjoined, is because they are satisfied they come under the general Rule given by the Apostle, viz. that all Things be done decently and in order. And the Reason why they observe no other Rites and Ceremonies, (whilst it must be acknowledged there are others every whit as orderly and decently in themselves as these) is because these alone are enjoined by an Authority, they are perswaded, has Power to interpose in these Things. And now if others do not break the general Rule given by the Apostle, but apprehend that a Freedom from Impositions in these Things, is one part of the Liberty they are commanded to stand fast in, why should we quarrel with, and prosecute them, especially whilst they acknowledge that it pertains to Authority to take notice of them who are indecent and disorderly in their Worship? Is it not enough that we may act according to our own more minute Perswasion, and have the Countenance and Encouragement of those in Power, but we must ruine and oppress them who will not truckle to our Fancies?

4. I have had the Opportunity to be acquainted both with Conformists and Nonconformists. And as I acknowledge I have great Cause to bless God for the worthy Labours and exemplary Lives of very many in the Church of England, so I ought to give others their due. And this I must say, that those of the Dissenters whom I have been acquainted with, have been Men of great Learning, exemplary Piety, strict Devotion, and extraordinary Loyalty: Men who have been diligent Attenders on God in his publick Ordinances, eminently Religious in their Families, who have had a great regard to Conscience in all the Parts of their Conversation with Men. They have neither been Haunters of Taverns, nor obscene and loose in their Discourse; nor have they been guilty of sitting Days and Nights at Cards and Dice. Indeed they have been Persons that could not be justly blamed for any thing, but that they had straiter Notions concerning humane Impositions in the Service of God, than we Conformists have.

Mr. Hunt's
Appen-
dix to his
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ing in Ca-
pital Cau-
ses in Par-
liam p 84.

And a very learned Gentleman has upon Consideration given a very just and good Reason of this. He expresseth himself in these Words: I think this their Scrupulosity may be of God, and that some Men are by him framed to it; that he hath provided it as a Bar and Obstacle in the Natures and Complexions of some devout Men, against any Innovations whatsoever, that dangerous ones may not steal upon the Church, for the better maintaining the Simplicity and Purity of Christian Religion and Worship.

If after all this, any remain unsatisfied, they may seek Satisfaction where they please, for

S A. B O L D E.

A
S E R M O N
Against
P E R S E C U T I O N , & c .

G A L A T I A N S iv. 29.

*But as then He that was born after the Flesh,
persecuted Him that was born after the Spirit,
even so it is now.*

TH E R E were some even in the Apostles Days, who laboured what they could to hinder the Progress of the Gospel, by Preaching up the Necessity of the Jewish Law. These having insinuated themselves into the Churches of *Galatia*, had infected many of those Christians, with their poisonous and false Doctrines: For though they did not openly declare themselves Enemies to the Gospel, yet they did supplant it as to its Power and Efficacy, by alledging its Insufficiency alone, and the Necessity of their being circumcised, and embracing those old Rules God had anciently enforced under the former Dispensation. They knew if they could leaven and corrupt them with these Principles, they did at first so speciously display, it would not be long before they should entirely undermine that Foundation the Apostles had laid amongst them. For however innocent their Pretences might seem at first, it is clearest, *Paul* perceived the Consequence would be dangerous. *Christ will not profit you at all, Gal. 5. 2.*

For this Cause it is he doth labour with them so earnestly, and useth such variety of Arguments to secure them from giving place any further, to those false and pernicious Teachers

chers, and to convince them of their Error and Fault, in giving way unto them at all;

Amongst other Arguments, he urgeth the different State Men are in when under the Gospel, from that they were in when under the Law : And that the Law was primarily designed only to prepare and fit Men for the Gospel, but not to continue in the same Place and Power after, as before ; no more than he that being arriv'd to ripe and full Years, is bound to continue under their Tutorage, who had the care of him in his Minority, *Gal. iv. 1.*

He afterwards proceeds to argue with them from the Nature of that Law they are so desirous to be under, *v. 21.* And then explains himself by a Similitude of *Abraham's* two Sons ; shewing there is as great a difference between those who are under a Gospel State, and them that are under the Law, as between that Son which was his natural Child, and that which was conferred on him by the special Promise and powerful Interposition of God's particular Blessing.

And thus he takes occasion to reflect on the great Alteration that was wrought amongst them, since they did listen to, and entertain these false and deceiving Apostles : And does, as it were, tell them, it was no wonder they should thus vary, and that they should now approve ways of Severity towards Christ's Apostles and Followers, seeing they did receive and adhere to them that were directly contrary to Christ's Ministers and Servants. Compare *Gal. iv. 14, 15.* with this *29. v.* It is no more than what hath fallen out in all Ages of the World. The Servants of Satan and Enemies of true Godliness, have always been for persecuting the faithful and obedient Children of God. And it seems by this Epistle, to be the especial and peculiar Character of them that are irreligiously and immoderately hot and zealous about Ceremonies, to be the greatest Persecutors of those who are most pious and conscientious. Look through all the Scriptures, nay look through all the Ages of the Church, you shall generally find that those who were most for the Persecution of others on the account of some In-differences relating to Religion, were very wicked superstitious Men ; Men that were inordinately zealous for, and fond of some outward Ceremonies. Now if a Fondness for any Ceremonies would maintain and justify Mens Persecution of others, who cannot approve their Fopperies, one would think these Teachers who were crept in amongst the *Galatians* should be excused, because they prest only those Things that had formerly been of Divine Appointment.

Dr. Still- ment. For, *He that came to take away the insupportable Yoke of Jewish Ceremonies, certainly did never intend to gall the Necks of to Irenic.*

his Disciples with another instead of it. But here we see how dangerous it is to give our selves too great a Liberty in admiring any bare external and accidental Appendage to Religion: Satan doth suddenly strike in on such Occasions, and doth so powerfully affect Mens Minds with some strange Apprehensions of the Beauty, Excellency, Usefulness, and Necessity of these Things, they are quite taken off from minding the inward Part and Soul of Religion. And by this Means they come to lay out all their Zeal about these trifling and worthless Parts; they even starve their own Souls, by a constant feasting on these meer Husks, and do what they can to destroy others Souls, at least their Bodies, by persecuting them, if they will not conceive and believe as well of these Things as they do. It is a very shrewd Sign and Token that a Man is a wicked unregenerate Man, if he be of a fierce and persecuting Temper; if he be prone to endeavour to ruin and trouble, or further the Vexation and Disturbance of serious, pious People, only because they cannot be as Ceremonious as he is.

He that was born after the Flesh, &c. The Words do immediately relate to the Sons of Abraham; *Ismael* is He that was born after the Flesh, viz. in a meer natural ordinary Way. Now, as he did persecute, and mock, and deride, and insult over *Isaac*, who was born after the Spirit, viz. who was the Son of the Promise, and in order to whose Birth there was the exerting a Divine Power in the accomplishing of that Promise which was made to Abraham, when both he and Sarah were past Hopes, and naturally incapable of having Children, so it is now, viz. Even so, those in these Days, who are of the Seed of Abraham, that pretend they have him for their Father, and are outwardly Jews, or that pretend themselves so out of servile Compliance, do persecute them that are born after the Spirit; that is, those who are the Children of the Promise, the Seed of Abraham, truly so called in a religious Sense, who succeed him in his Faith.

The Jews did very much boast of, and lay an extraordinary Stress on their being the Seed of Abraham: they placed most of their Religion on this, and thought it a sufficient Plea for themselves on all Occasions, and an effectual Security from those Judgments that were sometimes threatened against them; and therefore we find the holy Men in Scripture often labouring to convince them what a sandy Foundation they did build upon, *Mat. iii. 9. John viii. 39. Rom. iv. 12, 13, 14.* It is indeed a great Mercy, to be born of pious and religious Parents: Those Parents that have a great Familiarity and Interest with God, have usually a great Treasury and Portion of Blessings laid up with God for their Posterity, *Exod. xx. 6.* But People may lay too

great a Stress on this outward Priviledge. And if Children do not labour to walk in the Steps of religious and gracious Parents, but depend wholly on their Predecessors Holiness, they will be fearfully mistaken at last.

He that was born after the Flesh, &c. He that is a loose, wicked, unregenerate, carnal Person, is for persecuting and undoing him that is born after the Spirit, him that is serious, holy, strict, and conscientious; thus it has been, and thus it is. I will sum up all into this Proposition.

Doct.

Wicked, unregenerate Men, always have been, and still are for persecuting holy, religious, spiritual Men. Look through all the Books both of Old and New Testament, nay lookthrough all History, and you will still find, wherever you meet with Persecution, that it was carried on by the *Devil's Agents*, by wicked, lewd Men, against holy and righteous Men. Observe the Characters every where of Informers and Persecutors, and see if they have not been branded with some notorious and hateful Wickedness.

Indeed, Men can scarce arrive to such a Height of Wickedness as this is, till they have by the habitual Exercise of other Crimes, seared their Consciences, and are become so insensible, that all the commendable Notions and Sentiments that do usually accompany Mankind, are lost and eradicated out of their Breasts.

Consider these few Instances of Persecutors as they now occur, and then see whether all others be not of the same Complexion. What an obdurate Caitiff and Villain was *Cain*, that slew his own Brother, because more holy, and consequently better accepted with God than he was? What a vile Character is *Ismael* all along represented under to us? Were not they Drunkards that were against *David*, and made Songs of him? What were the false Prophets that set themselves against *Micah*? Were they not such as did prophecy Lies? Who were those that were for the burning of the three Children; and for the casting of *Daniel* into the Lions Den? Were they not all flattering and abominable Idolaters? What was *Judas* that betrayed Christ, that informed the High Priests and Scribes against his Master the Son of God? Was he not a covetous, mercenary Son of Perdition? What were those that swore and gave Evidence against Christ? Were they not a couple of perjured Miscreants? And if you search and enquire, you will find all Informers against, and Persecutors of the Just and Holy to be of the same Stamp. Are not the Informers and Persecutors of our Days, like unto those that were before them? Is it not evident to all, that they are notorious for Perjury, Falseness, Drunkenness, Whoredom, prophane and common Swearing? Are there any more regardless of the Lord's Day,

more

more irreligious and obscene in their Discourse, more vile, contemptible and base in the Eye and Opinion of every honest, pious, good or sober Person? Are there any so unjust, so false, so exorbitantly vicious, lewd and debauch'd as they?

Now Christ and Religion do not allow of Persecutions, of troubling and vexing, of ruining and undoing of any Men for little Indifferences, much less for Truth and Holiness: They are for advancing and propagating Holiness and Peace, and Love and Condescension, *Is. xlii. 2, 3.* Christ came not to destroy but to save Mens Lives, and sharply rebukes his Disciples when they would have call'd for Fire from Heaven to destroy the *Samaritans*: It is a sure Token Men are Enemies to Christ and Religion, when they are of a persecuting Spirit. It hath always been the great Character and Glory of the Christian Religion, that where-ever it came, it did promote and further Quietness and Peace, and Love and Brotherly Kindness, and did banish Wrath and Fury, and Malice, and every hateful and hurtful Disposition and Inclination. It was always thus, till Popery got some Power in the World, and then more barbarous Villanies, and outrageous Cruelties were perpetrated under this Name, than were known to the World before. And if it be carefully observed, you shall find, that in all Ages, those who have been most for cruel Methods against them that differ from them, have had most of the Spirit of Popery in them; and it is deplorably apparent, that now in our Days, they who appear most vigorous and active in prosecuting those Protestants who differ from others in some accidental Matters, have a great Affection for Popery, and are hastening towards *Rome* as fast as they can.

That the following part of my Discourse may be as plain and easy to you as possible, I will reduce what I design to say on this Subject, to these following Heads. 1. I will tell you what Persecution is. 2. Name more particularly the Characters of them that are Persecutors. 3. Shew you whence it is that wicked Men are so violently set against the Godly. 4. I will make some brief Application of the whole.

I am first of all to tell you, what Persecution is: And ^{1st.} it is an endeavouring to trouble, molest, disturb, kill, or any way hurt and injure another Person on some religious Account. Every Prosecution of a Person, is not properly Persecution, but only when it is grounded on some religious Affair. A Man may be guilty of Sin in prosecuting another upon civil Accounts, but this Sin comes under another Denomination, as Oppression, Injustice, unpeaceable Brangling, &c. Now Prosecution is much what the same in

in Religion that Oppression is in Civils. When Men will not suffer others to enjoy that Liberty, and those Rights in Religion, which either Nature or Revelation do allow them, but will be severe against them, if in every accidental Matter they will not be just of their Mind. When Men do hale others to Tribunals, and procure them either to be punished in their Bodies or in their Estates, or to be deprived of their Lives or Civil Liberties, because they either perform some Duty God has expressly commanded, in a Way they do not approve, or because they will not consent to embrace and comply with those Determinations they have just Reason to believe are sinful. Whilst Men are not openly wicked, but though not free from common Infirmities, which do unavoidable accompany humane Nature in this frail Estate, yet free from gross and scandalous Sins, whilst they deny not any Doctrine of Christianity, nor divulge any Tenet to the Prejudice of Christianity, nor do any way endeavour to disturb the Peace of the Government under which they live; they have a right to a peaceable and quiet Residence, and ought to be free from any Molestation, though they cannot in every accidental Thing attain to the same Latitude with others. Whoever goes about to disturb and injure, or contract on such as these, Fines or other Punishments, because they cannot receive and comply with those supernumerary Conceits some do too much please themselves with, and press with too much warmth on others, are too liable to this heavy Charge of Persecution. And if we only consider what it is they are so concerned for, we may see too much Reason to conclude they have no great Portion of commendable Properties. Wherefore I will now proceed to the

2dly.

Second Point, which is to account to you some of their Characters more particularly, or to shew you what kind of People Persecutors generally are. They are commonly observed to be the worst, the most brutish and degenerate part of Mankind. Consult others, read Histories, or consider what you may learn from your own Observation, you will find them to come generally under some very scandalous and offensive Characters. They are usually taken to be the very Pest of Society. It is almost as dangerous to live amongst them, as amongst the wild and savage Beasts of the Desert. They are a sort of Tygers and Lions, the most ravenous Beasts of Prey with humane Visages. Were the Pythagorean Notion of the Transmigration of Souls received, the whole World would then conclude them nothing but humane Carcases acted with Wolfish Breath: More particularly, they have some or all of these Characters and Qualities attending them:

1. They

1. They are Men of a very superstitious, blind and ignorant Zeal. And there is no one thing that makes Men more formidable and troublesome, than undue and mistaken Zeal: It is like Fire when it meets with Gunpowder and other combustible Matter; it devours all before it, and its Flames become unquenchable. Superstitious Bigots place Religion in Things that are at best but bare humane Inventions, many times pure diabolical Suggestions; and then Satan to ingulf them further, doth so excite and irritate them, they contend and strive for these Things, as if Heaven, Soul, and Eternity were all at Stake: Hence it is, they represent all that are not of their Way and Mind, as the greatest Criminals and Malefactors. No sooner do Men place Religion where God placeth none, but Satan obtains a great Power and Influence over them, and at last hurries them headlong into strange and wild Extravagancies in the Defence, and for the Propagation of those Points. These are usually the most fierce and barbarous of all other People. For it is usually observed that superstitious Men are very fearful, and that the greatest Cowards are most revengeful and cruel, if they can obtain an Advantage. *Paul's* blind Zeal made him a Persecutor: *He did it ignorantly*: And our Saviour tells us of some that would kill and murder Men, and flatter themselves with a Perswasion that they were therein *doing God and Religion good Service.* Joh. xvi. 2

2. They are Men of insufferable Pride and Malice: there is an absolute Necessity that some degree of that Popish Conceit of Infallibility should prevail in all that are Persecutors, to reconcile themselves to their own Practices: For who can be so absurd and foolish, as to endeavour to ruin others, because they will not believe or practise what they themselves do acknowledge they are not so certain concerning, but that it is possible they may be in an Error and Mistake? Those who are Persecutors do expect all should yield to them, and take them for Oracles; and if they be not thus received, they think the Affront is too great to be endured, and therefore must be revenged. Malice and Revenge hath generally a very great Influence on all Persecutions. Your Persecutors are usually People of a haughty, curst, and poisonous Nature, they love to be *doing Evil*: Their Delight is to hurt and offend them with whom *God is pleas'd*. They are canker'd and ill-natured, and never pleased but when they have an Opportunity to intrap and make the *Innocent fall*: They cannot bear Contradiction. *Zedekiah* was so impatient of Contradiction, he no sooner hears *Micaiah* bring a different Message from his, and discover how a lying Spirit was in the Mouths of the other Prophets, but he *xxii. 24* falls upon *Micaiah* and buffets him.

3. 3. They are Men of desperate and broken Fortunes, or else great Worshippers of *Mammon*. They do commonly take up Informing, and Swearing, and Persecuting as a Trade to live by. They scarce know how to subsist but by preying on the Wealth and Estates and Goods of those honest, sober, religious People they do inform and swear against: Men that are so lazy, they cannot Work; so luxurious, they have not wherewithal to maintain their Lusts; and of so ill and blasted a Fame and Reputation, none dares trust them: these are indeed a fit sort of People to persecute the Righteous: they cannot live unless some or other fall by their Means. There are two sorts of most abominable and wicked Ways Men have found out to maintain themselves and feed their Lusts by: The one is Robbing on the High-way, and the other is Informing against and persecuting the Righteous. Now those that apply to the latter Way, are the most infamous of the two; for as they are wicked enough to commit as great Villanies as the other dares, so they have not Courage to adventure on such dangerous Courses, and to expose themselves to so much Hazard for a Livelihood as the other do. They think it easier to swear, than hector and affright Men out of what they have. The wise Man seems to give a very lively Description of these People in *Prov. iv. 16, 17.* *They sleep not except they have done Mischief, and their Sleep is taken away unless they cause some to fall, for they eat the Bread of Wickedness, and drink the Wine of Violence.*

If there be any Persecutors whose Fortunes are not altogether so despicable and small, they are such as make a *Mammon* their God: The Hopes of getting Wealth doth very powerfully irritate them to what they do. Was it not thirty Pieces of Silver that made *Judas* betray his Master?

- Prov. i. 11.* 13. What is the Reason Sinners do excite one another to wait for Blood, and to lurk privily for the innocent without Cause? Is it not because they hope they shall find all precious Substance, and shall fill their Houses with Spoil?

4. 4. They are extremely profligate and scandalous in their Lives. Men that are very loose, prophane, and every way debauched: Such as are common Swearers, Drunkards, Whoremongers, and professed Enemies to every Thing that is serious, holy and good: Men that have prostituted themselves to every Lust and Wickedness, that have no more of Religion than an outward Name, being Atheists in their Hearts, and many times so in their Profession: Such as think there is no Happiness but what agrees with *Epicurus's* Conceit, making their Belly their God, and minding nothing but the Things of this World. Your ordinary forsworn and perjur'd Wretches, are the People that do most commonly

commonly seek a Livelihood, by being suborn'd to swear against them that *fear the Lord*. They that never scruple to tear the Name of God in Pieces, and to affront their Maker on every turn, by taking his Name in vain, who emboss every Word they speak with some dreadful Oath or other, who dare impudently swear a hundred Oaths in an Hour, without any Provocation, these are the fittest Men to inform and swear against, and endeavour their Ruin, who have a religious and truly conscientious Regard to the Name of God, and every thing on which he hath stamp'd his Image. No wonder such as these should solemnly devote and prostitute their Souls to Hell, by swearing even falsely against others, when they have the Temptation and Incouragement of getting Wealth and Riches; since they are so accustomed to affront their Maker, they think they never speak genteely, unless they set their most high God at utmost Defiance, and do in Words at length, challenge him to Damn them. He that sets himself apart to Satan's Service, by indulging to all the Lusts of the Flesh, that can boast of his Drunkenness and Uncleaness, of his frequent Excesses, and every Days Debauch, that can unconcernedly, or rather with Triumph speak of his Hopes and Desires of being Damn'd for ever, that defiles the Air he speaks in, and offends all he comes amongst with his prodigious Oaths and Execrations; this Man is ready prepared if an Occasion do offer it self, or can by any means be obtained, to swear a conscientious, religious Man out of his Right, and himself into it. That Man that will ordinarily endanger his Soul, and swear for nothing, will much more do so, be it right or wrong, when he hath the Temptation of Wealth, and it may be the Applause and Commendation of Great Men for his Incouragement.

Having given this Account of the two first Particulars, I shall now enquire whence it is that wicked Men are such bitter and inveterate Enemies against the Godly? Constant Experience is an undeniable Proof of the Truth of it; for no Age hath passed, but the worst Men have been contriving and endeavouring to do the Righteous some Displeasure. We need not consult Histories, to confirm what I am now treating of, for we may every where take notice of the deplorable Truth and Certainty of it amongst our selves. But from amongst the many Instances which might be mentioned, as having some Influence in, and concurring to this, I will only name these few.

1. There is a desperate and deadly Enmity against Godliness, and so against good Men, rooted deeply in the Nature of wicked Men. Ever since we lost the Image of God; We are *by Nature the Children of Wrath*, not only as we are

3dly.

I:

are subject and liable to the Wrath and Displeasure of God, but as we are of a wrathful, furious, and unreconcilable Temper. We are naturally Enemies not only to God, but to one another also. And it is to be ascribed principally, rather wholly, to the wise Conduct and Providence of God, that all Men are not constantly up in Arms, and always endeavouring the utter Extirpation one of another. But this Enmity is especially set against all Goodness. When Man lost Holiness, he became a most violent Adversary to it. As you observe when a Man hath tasted of the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come, if he apostatize, he becomes the most virulent and implacable Enemy to it: so it is with Man naturally since the Fall. The Devils, that were such pure and holy Angels, are now the greatest Haters of Holiness.

Heb. vi. 5,
6.

Wicked Men are of a curst, envious, malicious Temper; they are of a persecuting Nature, and have a great deal of Savageness in their Temper; they are against Holiness, as being contrary to their Nature, and thus become so violent against good Men. Look at any Creature, you will find it hath an Aversion to those Things which are of a contrary Nature, and if there be any thing of Wildness and Cruelty, and Savageness intermixed, then it is extraordinary violent against those which are of the contrary Nature. But those Things which have not such a Savageness intermixt, they only testify their Aversion by a peaceable withdrawing themselves, not at all endeavouring the Destruction or Hurt of the other. This is very apparent in the Wolf and the Lamb: They delight not in the Society one of another, but the Lamb, though of so contrary a Nature to the Wolf, doth not seek the Life or Hurt of the Wolf; but the Wolf is not satisfied but with the total Destruction of the Lamb. Nor is this only because the Wolf doth usually prey and feed on such Creatures, for then when the Hunger were satisfied, that rapacious and fierce Temper would cease. That Creature which is of a fierce and ravenous Nature, will destroy and kill not only out of Necessity, but also for Sport and Recreation. Thus wicked Men they are of a contrary Nature to the Godly, and have much Wildness and Ravenousness intermixed: *They cannot sleep unless they make some to fall*; and therefore they are resembled to and set forth by those Creatures which are wholly set upon destroying the Harmless and Innocent. *They lie lurking privily in their Den, that they may catch the Righteous.*

If you ask what the Reason is, that the Righteous and Holy do not persecute the Wicked, as well as the Wicked do them, the Nature of each being equally contrary to each other?

other? I answer, the Roughness and Severity of good Mens Natures is taken away by that sanctifying and altering Grace which is bestowed on them, and for which they are so much hated by the other. The new Nature conferred on them, hath the harmlesness of the Dove accompanying it. A sanctified Nature, so far as under the Power and Influence of Sanctification, hath no Hatred, nor Envy, nor Malice, nor any other Quality that is hurtful: It dares not hate or hurt an Enemy.

And the true Reason why ungodly Men do no more hurt to the Righteous, is because God restrains them; he puts *his Hook into their Nose, and his Bridle into their Lips*, and checks them.

Contrariety causeth their Aversion to the Godly, but it is that Fierceness which is intermixed, which causeth the Violence of the Persecution; as you see Tygers, Wolves, Lions, and Bears, do pursue, and kill, and devour Sheep, Lambs, and other innocent and profitable Creatures; and as Hawks and Kites do fly after, and prey on Turtle-Doves and Pigeons, so do wicked, outrageous, ungodly Men, persecute and trouble the Just and Holy.

2. Their natural Enmity is very much increased and excited into Aft by very unjust Prejudices, which they imbibed and entertain with Delight. A wicked persecuting Person rejoiceth to hear of any thing which tends to the Defamation and Disrepute of one that is truly Religious: He labours to spread and divulge it abroad, and aggravates every Mistake, and almost unavoidable Infirmary, representing it as an hideous and unpardonable Crime: Nay, he usually attributes the Faults of some particular Persons to the whole Profession. Thus the very Name of a pious Man is odious and insupportable to him; and he talks as virulently against, and desires as vehemently the utter Destruction of every one, how Harmless, Good, and Innocent soever, who comes under such a Denomination, as against the vilest Miscreant and Criminal in the World, tho' he never knew or heard of any Hurt by the one, or any Good by the other.

It may not be amiss to take notice now of a Sin that prevails exceedingly at this time amongst our selves; which is, that we have disputed our selves into so much Wrath, such an Averseness and Enmity to one another, that Dissenters, and those who pretend to the Church, can scarce indure the Names of one another, unless some disgraceful and reproachful Term be annexed. Too many of them are become such fierce Adversaries one against another, that they have not only abandoned themselves from the eminent Exercise of that Charity and mutual Forbearance common

Christianity doth very much enforce, but they do with too much Appetite listen and enquire after, and instead of mourning for, do rejoice and almost triumph in the Faults which particular Persons on either Side are chargeable with; and which is yet a greater Fault, they are too frequent in applying the Guilt beyond its due extent.

By this Means do those who are corrupt, carnal, and sensual on each Side, labour to encrease our Animosities, and make our Divisions wider and more unhealable.

But it is most of all deplorable, that the Malignity and Poison of this Course, seems to diffuse and spread it self amongst them who have given undeniable and prodigious Evidences of extraordinary Learning, and sometimes of very great and deservedly imitable Moderation and Equanimity: Which discovers that when People do apply themselves to advance any Party with undue Warmth, they forget to observe that Decorum they have formerly commended to the World, and are too easily induced to use the meanest Arts in depressing the Cause they oppose.

It is certainly very unbecoming and unworthy of Men of great Learning, Holiness, and Gravity to endeavour to defame all that are of the contrary Persuasion, by suggesting to the World evil Surmises and Opinions concerning all in general, by reporting infamous Stories which concern only some few in particular; for besides the Injury they themselves do by this Means to those that are innocent, they both countenance the unjust Methods the worst of Men do use in decrying those they are against, and they furnish them with Materials to carry on their Design.

This hath been an ancient Method, People have used to *Jer. xx. 10.* revenge themselves on the Innocent. *Report, say they, and we will Report:* Do but either start any one Story that is real, with relation to some Particulars, or frame and coin a Story that will appear plausible, and let it once take Air, and we will soon help to transmit it further, and by this Means we *shall take our Revenge on them.*

But what a dreadful Blow would be given to Christianity in the Opinion of its professed Enemies, should all Parties labour to rake together the foul and enormous Offences of particular Persons amongst those they do oppose, and then publish them to the World, as what the whole Party doth either approve, or may justly be charged with?

There is no doubt but this Church (tho' its Government and Constitution be so pure, justifiable, and consonant to Apostolical Practice) would suffer very much, should but the almost ordinary Miscarriages of a great Number who pretend to the Clergy, be exposed to publick View; with an Account of the Encouragement they meet with, or at least

how

how free they are from Threats and Molestations, whilst others, who lead better Lives, and are more constant and diligent Preachers, and do express on all Occasions more of that Charity and Forbearance towards all Men, which Christianity doth so much commend and enforce, are frowned upon, and left open to the Rage and Fury of besotted, frantick, and debauch'd Bigots. There is no Defence against unjust Prejudice.

3. They apprehend, that the strict and holy Lives of Religious Men do very much reproach their lewd and vicious Courses: At least, they find that their pure and holy Doctrines do occasion them Anguish and Unquietness, Disturbance and Trouble in the perpetrating of their beloved Wickednesses. Why could not *Herodias* suffer *John Baptist* to keep his Head any longer? It was because she could not live quietly in her Uncleaness with her Husband's Brother, whilst he was still Preaching to *Herod*, that it was not lawful for him to have her. *Mat. xiv.* Indeed, there is not any thing doth more effectually discover the horrid Loathsomeness of wicked Mens Lusts and Practices, than the chaste, holy, and strict Conversations of pious Men. And therefore they are so much against them, even because their Doctrines and Lives do so much reprove their wicked Works of Darkness.

4. Holy Men are carrying on a different Work from that which ungodly lewd Men are designing and acting: They are Servants to different Masters, and therefore it is not to be expected they should accord very well. The good Man's Work doth defeat and ruin the Sinner's, and therefore he is against him, and doth persecute him all he can, because he belongs not to his Company, but is labouring to destroy his Master's Kingdom, and overthrow what he esteems his own greatest Interest. *If ye were of the World, the World would love his own; but because ye are not of the World, but I have chosen you out of the World, therefore the World hateth you. Joh. xv. 19.*

5. This proceeds many times from a very strong and powerful Impulse of Satan. As wicked Men are his Slaves and doing his Work, so he doth irritate and excite in a special manner to this very Instance of Persecuting the Godly. The Devil thinks he has most Work done, when the greatest number of righteous Men fall: And he concludes, that if he could by his Instruments absolutely suppress the Righteous, he should reign and triumph in the World without any Opposition. The Devil Rules in the Heart of the Children of Disobedience. *Eph. ii. 2.* And it is worth our Observation, that immediately before *Judas* went to the High-Priest, &c. to inform against and betray his Master, it is said, *the Devil entred into him*: So that one main Instance *Luke xxii.* whence 3, 4.

whence it is that wicked People do persecute the Righteous, *is because the Devil is in them*: The Devil doth as truly possess, act, and govern them that persecute the Righteous, as he did those that were called Demoniacks, when our Saviour was upon Earth. And tho' he do not cause them now to tear and rent, and torture themselves, as they did then, yet he has a more dreadful Influence on their Souls, and in-dangers them much more as to their spiritual and final E-state.

4thly. I am now in the last Place to apply what has been dis-coursed concerning Persecution, and will do it in a few Words.

1. For the Support and Encouragement of the Righteous, when persecuted and in Distress. Take care that the Re-proaches and Violences of the Ungodly do not affright you from your Uprightness, nor shake your Stedfastness. Those Storms and rustling Winds, their Threats and Menaces, should not break or overthrow you, but should rather have the same Influence on you that Blasts and Tempests have on firm and thriving Trees; whilst they break and over-turn those that are rotten and weak, they do only cause the other to take deeper and faster Root.

This is no more than what you must expect, and what every good Man ought daily to prepare for. He that is re-solved for *Heaven* must go through many Tribulations; you are warned of such Treatment before-hand. Our Saviour has dealt so plainly with all his Followers in this particular, that it is one great part of a Christian's Work, to live al-way in Expectation of those Things, that so he may not be surprized when they come. We have our every Day's Cross to wait for, and must be willing to take it up, and bear it away with Cheerfulness when ever it comes. We have not the clearest and most unquestionable Evidences of the Truth, at least the Power of Christianity in and over us, till we can cheerfully part with and resign up all, yea with Triumph bear away Reproaches, and Fears, and false Accusations, till we can lay down our very Lives rejoicingly for Christ, his Gospel, and Religion, if occasion be.

And if God sees fit to bring you to the Trial, it is that you may have the stronger Assurance of your unfeigned Love to him, and unconquerable Interest in him; and that you may display the Efficacy and Beauty of Religion unto the World in the most undeniable and constraining In-stances. The Persecutions of the first Christians gained Christianity a great Repute, and made such an Entrance for it into the World, as could never be stopt up or hindred, till Sloth, Carnality, and superstitious Conceits had cor-rupted the Minds and Lives of its Professors; and this happen'd

happen'd after they were burthened and over-loaded with Honours, Ease, Preferments, and a multitude of unneccessary and superfluous outward Accommodations.

The Saints and People of God have met with the same Treatment in all Ages: This has been their Lot and Portion when they have lived amongst wicked loose People: and we generally find that they took great Satisfaction in it. Our blessed Saviour was used thus himself. How was he reviled, scorned, reproach'd, falsely accused, spit upon, buffeted, whipt, and at last disgracefully crucified, by a degenerate inhumane People? You see the greatest and most absolute Innocence is not safe from the malicious Rage and Violence of ungodly Men. The Apostles, presently after, were served in the same manner: And when they were scourged, to render them a publick Scorn and Reproach, they went away, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be thus used for Christ. It is one part of the Vocation you are called to, to suffer for Christ: *Phil. i. 29.* The more that wicked Men do load you with contumelious Language and oppressive Fines and Mulcts, or do inflict on you corporal Punishments and Torments, the more they do to raise you to the Likeness of the blessed Jesus.

And indeed, it is not the least matter of rejoicing, that they who persecute you, are only such as *are born after the Flesh.* Your Enemies are they that are Enemies to God and Christ; worldly, sensual, devilish Men, *who glory in their Shame, who make their Belly their God, who are Enemies to the Cross of Christ, and whose End is Destruction.* It is a much greater Disgrace to be respected and spoken well of by such as these, than to have them always spitting out their Venome, and darting forth their forked Tongues and Stings against you: They will speak well of none but such as are infected with their Disease. They that are the Spawn of Satan, will undoubtedly have ill-will to the Children of God.

But what a rejoicing is it, that by this very means you are so particularly assured of a most glorious Recompence: Besides the inexpressible Consolation God will secretly communicate at present, he has provided, and in a special manner promised incomprehensible Felicities hereafter, *Mat. v. 10, 11, 12. 1 Pet. iv. 14.*

But then you must be sure that what you suffer for, be the Cause of Christ. Let it be true and real Religion, Conscience indeed, and not any groundless Fancy, unreasonable Humour, or unaccountable Resolution and Stubbornness you suffer for: Especially beware *that none of you suffer as a Murderer, or as a Thief, or as an Evil-doer, or as a busy Body in other Mens Matters.* These are the Faults and Characters of Persecutors themselves, and for these Things Men ought to suffer. *1 Pet. iv. 15.*

suffer. See that your Consciences be clear and well informed. Take care to understand the thing you contend for. Weigh your Opinions and your Practices in the Balance of the Sanctuary. Be sure your Cause be good, and then if you are persecuted, and do suffer, come under what Denomination you will, and let your Persecutors be who they will, of how great Power and Authority so ever, I dare and will pray, that *Peace may be upon you, and upon the whole Israel of God.* It is the Cause that makes the Martyr, tho' it is not always the Cause that makes the Persecutor.

2. 2. Let this caution you, that you be not guilty of this Sin. It will be found at last a very dreadful Thing to be a Persecutor; for by this means you become Fighters against God. And dare ye resolutely *Provoke the Lord to Jealousie?* are ye stronger than he? Did ever any set themselves against God and prosper? The Lord Jesus doth take what is done to his Followers and Disciples, as done to himself: and he will terribly avenge himself of the Adversaries and Destroyers of his People. You cannot hurt the People of God, but you offend and pierce God himself in the Apple of his Eye. And *Lukexviii. will not God (think you) avenge his own Elect, which cry Day and Night unto him? I tell you he will avenge them speedily.*

It were better for you, you had never been born, or that some fatal and miserable Stroke had ended your Lives as soon as you saw the Light, than that you should live to be Persecutors, *Mat. xviii. 6.* Have not Persecutors always come to some fearful End?

If you would not pull down divine Vengeance on your own Heads; if you would not make your selves and your Posterity infamous to all Generations, by inheriting the most dreadful Curses on your Bodies, your Estates, and all your Interests and Concerns; if you would not be the general Abhorrence of Mankind; if you would not rot away Piece-meal whilst you are alive; if you would not be your own unpitied Executioners; if you would not be filled with Horror and Consternation, by reason of a wounding, terrifying, and accusing Conscience; if you would not purchase to your selves the hottest Climate and Region in the infernal Pit, but can be content with an ordinary Damnation; if you have no desire to be the worst, the most miserable, the most contemptible of all that shall inherit everlasting Burnings, take heed of this Sin. The Devil never feasts so deliciously, as when served with Persecutors and Informers.

How variously and strangely has God testified his Displeasure and Wrath against Persecutors? Whole Volumes might be filled with bare Relations. Those Judgments have been inflicted on them, to make them a Scorn, an Abhorrence, and a Warning to Posterity, which were never known or heard

heard of in the World, 'till they were punish'd and made infamous by them.

And if you be Persecutors, God has the same and greater Plagues and Judgments in store for you.

I know there are few who apply themselves to this Course, but they flatter themselves, and endeavour to satisfy others, with some or other false and pretended Excuses: But alas, what will these avail you, whilst they are so thin and hollow, not only the All-seeing God, but the ordinary sort of People can see thorough them? Unless the Cause be too black and horrid to obtain the Patronage of Hell, or the Actors be sordid and scandalous enough to make the Devil ashamed of them, he will furnish with some Pretence to palliate and gloss the Fact.

But it is not enough that you have something to plead and say in your own Defence amongst Men, unless it be what will be warranted and approved by the Judge of all; for if you could so varnish the Severity you use to others, as to obtain the favourable Opinion of the generality of Men concerning it, what will this avail you, if when you appear before the Great Tribunal, you be found amongst Persecutors? All false Colours, and meretricious Paint will then disappear.

Now to secure you from this Danger, it will be needful to have a constant regard to these two Rules.

1. Have nothing to do with hurting, or contracting Damages on any serious, upright, conscientious Christian: Be not accessory, for a World, to the Ruine or needless Prejudice of any one who stands fast in the Faith of Christ. Those who agree with us in all the Substantials of Religion, and add no dangerous or destructive Tenet to these, who are holy, sober, chaste, temperate, righteous, compassionate and merciful, and who no way endeavour to disturb the publick Peace, but are vigorous Protestants, and resolute Opposers of the common Enemies of our Religion and Civil Rights, they ought (especially considering our present Circumstances) to be so far from being Persecuted and oppressed, as to have all the Encouragement and Countenance that pious Christians, and Loyal Subjects can claim and deserve. Do not hurt, persecute, or revile any, whom you have reason to believe the Lord Jesus will own, approve and honour. *Will Christ ever thank Men at the Great Day for keeping such out from Communion with his Church, whom he will vouchsafe not only Crowns of Glory to, but it may be Angels too, if there be any such Thing there?* *Dr. Stil- ling. Ire- nic. Praef. Mat. xxvii*

It had been well for Pilate if he had hearkened to that reasonable Message, *Have thou nothing to do with that just Man.*

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2. Take

2. **Take heed of, and avoid the very Appearances of this Sin :** Keep at as great a Distance from it as possible : Do not cherish in your Minds, any thing that may engage or incline to it. Cast away all unjust Prejudices, mortifie Wrath and Anger ; and shut your Ears against them that would incense you against those you differ from, by reporting false and malicious Stories of them.

Supposing it could not properly be called Persecution, to prosecute, and be severe with People about those Things which you are satisfied in your own Minds God has not concern'd himself about, either by commanding or forbidding them, yet your ruining, or making others suffer extremely for these Things, whilst they have other Apprehensions either of the Nature or Use of them, will unavoidably look too like Persecution (I think) for a serious, compassionate Christian to tolerate himself in. This seems not to have any of that Meekness, Condescension, and Forbearance our Religion doth so expressly and so vehemently enforce.

Nay, your addicting your selves to such Courses, will endanger the endearing of a rough, sowre, and unpeaceable Temper to you : And it may be, it will at last hurry you into such *Exorbitances*, as you did not at first either design or think of ; nay which will amount to inexcusable and downright Persecution.

This will certainly make way for your entertaining very unjust Prejudices against others : It will lay you liable to greater Transports in your Passions : It will expose you to more and stronger Temptations than you are at first aware of ; it will lay you open to the Wiles of Satan, that cunning Adversary, and great Destroyer of the Godly.

Nay, it is probable enough, that when those Christian Sentiments and Resolves you do at present retain, are a little worn off, and by disuse become feeble, the very Desire and Ambition of Acquaintance with Men of Power and Repute, who are Enemies to Protestants, as such, may engage you in those Practices, which both your deceitful Hearts, and the better Hopes of others, made you believe you should for ever detest.

Satan very seldom Attempts to draw any Man to direct Persecution at first ; he only leads them at first to the Outskirts, and fleshes them by degrees : But when he has once brought Men to take pleasure in seeing others suffer, tho' not for real Religion, the Sweetness of Blood, or the Satisfaction of getting Wealth, or the Honour of being caressed by Great Men, will endanger to qualify them to undertake with Unconcernedness and Triumph, the most barbarous and inhumane Persecutions imaginable.

Men know not where they shall stop, if once they give way to Satan, or their own corrupt Inclinations in Matters of this Nature. People do sometimes act those Things under the Alteration of their outward Estate and Condition, and become so extremely savage and cruel as they could not before imagine; which they could not endure to think of without the highest Concernment and Indignation, *2 Kings* viii. 12, 13.

But notwithstanding all this, you may express your Love to, and Zeal for the Church, its Service, and its Ceremonies, sufficiently other Ways. I dissuade not from any Methods, which do any way tend to the Honour of our Church, or to the making of real Profelytes; but only from those which indanger its Reputation, and are not at all suitable to the Matter and Occasion of our Differences. I would perswade you to be as Faithful as possible to the Church and its Interests; but not to express your Zeal in so confused and preposterous a way, as will be destructive to humane Society, or endanger your washing your Hands in the Blood of Innocents: Use all the Scripture, and rational Arguments you can, to win upon, and overcome, and convince them that dissent, but beware of Extremity and Violence.

How ridiculous and absurd is it, to hear Men talk very gravely at sometimes, that the Church hath no Weapons but Tears and Prayers, and yet presently to see the same Men using Rods and Swords, and Axes in the Churches Behalf? When the Church is in danger of being clouded, eclipsed, and overcome, and suppress'd by Popery, then it is unlawful to endeavour to help our selves, we must only lie prostrate, and try if we can wash away our Sorrow with our Tears, or at most, content our selves with, *Lord help us*. But when we consider them we have got an Ascendency over, it becomes Glorious (and indeed is more than Christian) to swagger and triumph, and tread upon Men of the same Religion with our selves, only because they differ from us in some unhappy Circumstances.

When the Church doth stand upon its proper Basis, and shines in its Native Beauty and Lustre, there will be no *hurting in God's Holy Mountain*.

Is. lxxv. 25.

That Method which hath most of Lenity, Forbearance, Love, and Meekness, doth best comport with the Nature and Design of Christianity, and most answers that Temper our Saviour and his Apostles commended to the World, both by their Practices and Precepts, *Luke ix. 55. 2 Tim. ii.*

24.

3dly, Let me say a few Words to you that are Persecutors, you that are Villifying and Reproaching, Fining and Distrain-

ing on, Murdering and tearing in Pieces the Members of Jesus Christ, if you have any Shadow of Humanity yet remaining, be perswaded to reflect on what you do, consider what your Condition is; if you are not become Cruel, like *Lam. iv. 3.* the Ostriches in the Wilderness, if your Consciences be not seared with a hot Iron; if you do not believe that your Impieties are a sure and impregnable Safe-guard and Defence against all the Thunder-Bolts of God's Vengeance; if you think they do not make you as impenetrable by the Arrows of the Almighty, as the Scales of the Leviathan render him by the Arrows which are commonly cast at him, then deliberate a while, and think seriously, whether one time or other you shall not be ashamed of, and sorry for what you now perpetrate? If you believe there is any Truth, or any Honesty, or any Things that are Pure, or Just, or Lowly, or of good Report; or if there be any Virtue, then consider how contrary to, and inconsistent with all these, Persecution is.

Persecution is a Sin that destroys common Humanity: It makes you much more fit to be banish'd from all reasonable Society, to abide in the Wilderness and Desart with the ravenous, devouring Monsters you resemble, than to be permitted to prey on those who are as humble as the Child, as meek and innocent as the Dove.

You that are Informers and Persecutors, be you who you will, of what Name, Size, Quality soever, you are of the worst Extraction of all other Creatures: *Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Lusts of your Father ye will do: He was a Murderer from the Beginning, and abode not in the Truth, because there is no Truth in Him.* And if you believe not this, you may read the Reason of your Unbelief in the next Verse: *Because I tell you the Truth, ye believe me not.* *John. viii. 44.*

vers. 45. You are at present the Reproach of humane Race: Judgments and Curses of the greatest Size do await you here, and are ready to be poured out upon you, to make you Instances of astonishing Vengeance, an Abhorrence to all the World, and an insupportable Burthen unto your selves. Nor is this your whole Portion, for more than ordinary Wrath, those Torments and Horrors which have peculiar and most envenomed Mixtures in them, are prepared and kept in Store, to make your Eternity more amazing and dreadful than that which will for ever be the Punishment of other Sinners.

If Depart from me ye Cursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels, be the mildest Sentence which shall be pronounced on them who have only with-held their Charity, and not administred to the Necessities of Christ's Members, what a terrible Damnation must you expect, who have both hardened your selves against all their Tears and Complaints,

Complaints, their Groans and Entreaties, and added Affliction to their Affliction? What will be your Doom when Christ shall come to be Glorified in his Saints, and shall charge you in particular, with pulling the Food out of the Mouths, and Cloaths from the Backs of his dearest Children; yea, with eating their very Flesh, and drinking their Blood; with taking from them their Means for Subsistence, rifling their Houses, devouring their Goods, wasting their Estates, and haling them to Goals and Prisons?

You that persecute the Righteous, that you may maintain your Lusts, and gratify your luxurious Appetites and Desires, with their Wealth and Estates, there is a dreadful Hand of Vengeance ready to appear against you. For all your Huffing and Hestoring, your Swearing and Damning, your Carouzing and Quaffing, your Healthing and Whoring; for all your seeming Jollity and Mirth, your Countenances will change, Paleness shall seize your Faces, Astonishment and Fear your Minds: You are at present but acting afresh *Belshazzar's Folly* and Wickedness: You are *Dan. v.* drinking the Blood of Innocents instead of Wine, you are Feasting your selves with the *Substance of the Righteous*. The Vessels you use, are purchased with the Lives and Estates of the Just and Upright. *For these Things God will not refrain, but will certainly be avenged of such Wickedness.* *vers. 5.* When the Divine Hand doth write your Doom (as certainly it will) then will your *Countenance be changed, and your Thoughts* *vers. 9.* *troubled, the Joints of your Loins will be loosed, and your Knees will smite one against another.* Your making your selves drunk with Wine, and your being compassed about with Great Men and Nobles, with your Wives and Concubines, will not preserve you from these Effects.

What will you say for your own Vindication, when the Lord Jesus shall appear in all his Glory, and particularly charge you with Hurting, Defaming, Impoverishing, Starving, Fining, and Murthering this and that Friend, Servant, or Child of his? For all your confident Domineering at present, tho' you look and talk now as if you would Frown, and Threaten, and Swear them, and all that are Advocates for them, into Goals, nay into their Graves, and were it possible lower than that, a Time is hastening when Shame and Confusion will cover your Faces, and an ignominious Silence shall betray your Guilt. A Day is now approaching, when you will think it a kind of Happiness if you might sink privately into the Places of Eternal Torment, and so escape the solemn Reprimand and Condemnation you must have for this Sin in particular, before all the World.

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I know there are several Things you insist on, to justify your selves in what you do: But alas, they are such poor and thin, and slight Excuses, they will be so far from yielding you any Relief in the Judgment-Day, that had you any Shame, or Grace, and Modesty, you would blush to name them at present. And that you may not any longer cheat your selves with a vain Pretence, that you have enough to justify you in what you do, I will briefly name what you principally trust to, and then shew you how foolish and impertinent such Excuses be.

There are three Things generally insisted on by Informers and Persecutors for their own Vindication: They are these: 1. They say they do no more than what the Law doth countenance them in. 2. The Persons they prosecute are dangerous, seditious, rebellious People. 3. What they do, is out of Love to, and Zeal for the Church.

These Things are commonly alledged, and People do depend on them as sufficient and unanswerable. But how unjust these Pretences be, when pleaded by foreign Persecutors of the Protestants, I hope all are satisfied who do heartily approve the Reformation. Now the Prosecution of Dissenting Protestants amongst our selves, is generally defended by the same Arguments. And tho' I acknowledge there is a great Difference in the Things, on the account of which the Protestants are prosecuted here, and in other Places, yet all those Abarements being allowed for, the Generality of our fierce and furious Prosecutors cannot be excused from Guilt by these Instances. This will appear more clearly, if we consider the Particulars pleaded distinctly and by themselves.

1st. You say, you do no more than the Law alloweth. To this I answer in these following Particulars.

1. You do generally understand the Law as little as any other People: And oftentimes when the Law is on a Man's side, as to the Matter of what he does, it is against him in Pref. to his the Method he observes. This is undeniably evident in Hist. of the Prosecution of the Protestants in France.
2. Those who have had as good Opportunities as any others to find out the Intention and Meaning of the Laws, do put another Interpretation on them than you do: And therefore you had need to have strong Assurance you are in the right, before you adventure on those Courses you cannot justify, but by such a Pretence as in general is a very blind and imperfect Excuse: For Instance, If the Law condemns seditious Preaching, and you will prosecute and undo a Man only for Preaching, and not prove any thing of Sedition, you are certainly so far from having the Law to justify you, that this general Plea will not excuse you to a Conscience

ence that is in any measure sensible of ordinary Obligations.

3. The Prosecution of these Laws hath been declared inconvenient and hurtful to the Protestant Religion, by them who understand the Nature, the Tendency, and the Obligation of these Laws, as well or better than any of the violent and outrageous Prosecutors of them. And tho' this cannot repeal or make null the Laws, yet the publick Opinion of so Great, Honourable, and August an Assembly, seems very should have so much Influence, as to check the inordinate Zeal some are too apt to lay out in their unnecessary Informations and Presentments.

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4. If you must needs express your Zeal for established Laws, there are others which you may understand more easily, and the transgressing of which will be more obvious to you, and in the pursuance of which you may do the Church and the Kingdom good Service; viz. Those Laws which are made against Swearing, Drunkenness, Prophaning the Lord's-Day, &c. Have not those Laws which are enforced by God as well as Men, as great a Power and Authority over you, as those which are only humane Sanctions? Your talking of the Law is of no weight, whilst you your selves do resolutely transgress every Day those Laws which are of greater and more general Use.

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But you say in the second Place, that those you prosecute are dangerous, seditious, and rebellious People.

2dly.

If you can prove this Charge against them, in God's Name go on, and never spare them. But is it not very unjust to say they are rebellious, and not prove any thing of this Nature against them? Why do you not inform against them under this Notion, and then prove it substantially against them? But to talk thus, and when all comes to be enquired into, it is nothing but for serving God, when it may be you were serving the Devil and your Lusts in a Tavern, or Brothel-House, is the most villainous Wickedness imaginable.

Ans^r.

Is not this to write after the most extravagant Instance Present we have in the French Persecutors? Nay, is it not to out- State of do what is reported of the Intendant of Rochefort, who sup- Protest.in pressed a Protestant Minister, when the Deponent could France, say no more, but that *tho' there was nothing to be found fault p. 21. with in his Words, yet he perceived his Thoughts were not innocent?*

Besides, many of those you prosecute have given great Demonstrations of their Loyalty, having suffered more in the late Times of Usurpation, for the King, than many, if not all of you have, and contributing much more to the bringing of him back to his Crown, and other just Rights.

Those

Dr. Bur-
net's Fast
Sermon
30 of Jan.
1681, p.
16.

3dly,

1.

Those who never did more for the King, than make them-
selves drunk with drinking his Health, are not fit to com-
pare, in Point of Loyalty, with them that lost their Estates,
and hazarded their Lives for him. And many of the most consi-
derable Dissenters did even then, when it was not so safe to do it as
it is now, openly declare against it (i. e. the Murder of the late
King) both in their Sermons and Writings. This is what in Ju-
stice cannot be denied them, and many of them were no less Active
and Industrious, and were indeed highly Instrumental in the bring-
ing Home of his Majesty that now Reigns.

You pretend that all you do is out of Love to, and Zeal
for the Church. To which I offer these following Consi-
derations, which may discover how false this Pretence is.

1. You are not qualified to do the Church any Service.
The Church suffers more by the Ungodliness and Debauched-
ness of your Lives, than by any one thing whatsoever. All
the Dissenters in the Nation cannot prejudice the Church
half so much as you drunken, swearing, prophane Infor-
mers and Persecutors do.

Indeed, the Church would be much better without you
than with you: and could she proceed against you in some
of those Ways you would have her use against others, she
would do her self great Right, and very much commend
that Purity and Holiness, and Strictness, which would
greatly adorn her, and which is by your means very much
obscured.

Can any thing reflect more upon a Church, than to have
those Men countenanced in prosecuting others, who do
themselves discover no real Love to God or Religion, and
of whom no Good can be said by others, nay who have no-
thing to say in their own Vindication, but that when they
are in the height of their Debauches, when they are drunk
and prophane enough to be the Reproach and Abhorrence of
all Society, they do then pretend to admire and applaud the
Church, and to decry and rail at, and swear against Dis-
senter?

You do the Church an unspeakable Injury, you prejudice
her almost beyond Repair, by pretending either Love for, or
Alliance unto her. For by this means you do what you are
able, to represent her to Strangers, as the only Receptracle of,
and Sanctuary for the most infamous Criminals and Villains.
It is no Credit to any Woman, be she never so Chaste, So-
ber, and Honest, that the greatest Debauchees and lewdest
Miscreants are encouraged for her Service, and claim her
Patronage.

And that which renders you still more unfit for this Ser-
vice you intrude your selves into, is, that you would make
the Church consist only of such as your selves, and dare
impudently

impudently decry all the sober, moderate, and pious Conformists, with the same Virulence you set your selves against them you call Nonconformists. So that were it in your Power, you would turn the Church into a meer Stew, or Ale-house, or School of Sin and Debauchery.

There are, God knows, too too many Debauchees in the Nation, who would be thought great Champions for the King and the Church, but do infinite Prejudice to both, by the mad and frantic Expressions of their Zeal, who do mighty Honour to Fanaticism, by charging all with it that run not with them to the same Excess of Riot.

As to all those who pretend to be of our Communion, and yet live scandalous Lives, and think that their owning themselves the Sons of the Church, will make Attonement for their Immoralities, it is to be fear'd they have done us more hurt, than ever they will do us good. And unless they would reform, it may perhaps be wished that we were rid of them. Let them declare themselves Fanaticks, Papists, any thing rather than Members of the Church of England. It would perhaps be more desirable to live in a mean, low, afflicted Condition without such Company, than to govern the World with it.

2. This is an old hypocritical Pretence, with which the Enemies of God and Religion have usually cover'd their wicked Persecutions and barbarous Cruelties. This cannot secure you from Vengeance. God encourages his People to hope that he would appear for them, and against such as should make this Pretence for their persecuting them: *Hear the Word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his Word, your Brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my Names sake, said, Let the Lord be Glorified, but he shall appear to your Joy, and they shall be ashamed.* They pretended, what they did against them that trembled at the Word of the Lord, was for the Church, and that God might be Glorified, but yet God would bring them to Shame for their Hypocrisy.

I am afraid there are many who talk high for the Church, who would be glad to see her welter in her own Blood, or consumed to Ashes with those Flames they hope to kindle by their own furious or intemperate Zeal. People who are wicked enough notwithstanding their loud Cries for the Church, to set her on Fire themselves, and then like Nero, Triumph, and Dance, and Sing, when they behold her devouring Flames, and utter Devastation.

As some in the late Times did very wickedly face Rebellion with the Name of Religion, so it is to be fear'd some in these Days do cloak Popery, Revenge, and Hatred to all Piety, with the Name of the Church. *All that swear by the Name of the Lord, and make mention for the God of Israel, do not do it in Truth nor in Righteousness.*

E

3. Your

Dr. Fowl-
er's Affize
Ser. 1681,
p. 29.

Dr. Sharp's
Serm. be-
fore the
House of
Commons,
April 11.
1679.

Is. lxvi. 5.

Is. xlviii. 1.

and People, to persecute and oppress others, or to use violent, fierce, and ruining Courses to advance themselves and their Interests. And it was the way of the pure Christian Church, anciently, and since the Reformation, to use no Methods with their Enemies, but what were full of Reason, Scripture, Meekness, and Christian Forbearance.

The learned Bishop of *St. Asaph* does determine the Question, who are the Church of God? Or, who are the Enemies of it? by bringing it to this Issue; *That they who are most given to hate and destroy others, especially those who differ from them in Religion, they are not the Church of God, or at least they are so far corrupt in that Particular.*

These Courses do not agree and suit with the Temper and Constitution of our Church: And therefore I am afraid, they who use these Methods, or countenance and encourage them who appear boistrous in them, are either ignorant of, and Strangers to our Constitution, or implacable Enemies to our Church. Instead of doing the Church any Service, they seem to study to do her all the Mischief they can, under a contrary Pretence. *It is not the Genius of our Church she hath no Doctrine that teacheth Persecution, she hath not practised it, as others, when they were in Authority, I thank God for it, and I hope she will alway continue in that Temper, which being added to the other Marks of a true Christian Church, may assure us that she is a Church according to the Mind of Christ.*

It was one Thing that did not a little commend the Protestant Religion to the World, that after its Establishment in these Nations, tho' Popery gained Power again in these Kingdoms, and influenced its Professors to treat the Protestants with all the Cruelty and Outrage that Religion doth inspire Men with, or direct them to; yet when in Queen Elizabeth's Reign Popery was cashier'd, and the Protestants had the Power and Laws on their Side, they used no Violence, Fury, or Revenge at all; *Tho' living in the midst of them, whose dearest Friends and Relations they had murdered, and tho' Protestants could say there goes he that burnt my Father, or he that murdered my Brother, or that brought them to that cruel Death; tho' the Queen her self could say who they were that in her Sister's Time, dealt most insolently and barbarously with her, yet when she came to be their Queen, for ten Years, she touched not a Hair of any of their Heads.*

Notwithstanding Bonner had in the preceding Reign been a most bloody and barbarous Persecutor of the Protestants, and had often in his Persecution of them exceeded what the Law allowed, yet this was not revenged upon him; no, so far were the Reformers from doing any thing that might looklike Revenge, that he was suffered to go about in Safe-

Serm. before the House of Lords, Novemb. 5th. 1680. p. 8.

Id. p. 20.

Id. p. 28.

Dr. Burnet's Hist. Reformation. part. 2d. p. 396.

3. 3. Your not prosecuting them, who play and drink, or walk and loiter away the Lord's-Day, and other Times they should allot for the publick Service and Worship of God, does plainly demonstrate it is not any hearty Concernment for Religion, or the Honour of the Church of *England*, which engages you in these Methods, but rather an invincible Detestation to Holiness and Truth as such. Could you with the like Impunity shut up our Church Doors, and revile our Liturgy, and cast Contempt on our Bishops, and all the other serious and hearty Officers of our Church, who oppose and contradict you in your Lusts and Wickedness, it is not much to be doubted but you would be as severe and tyrannous this way, as you be the other.

If you have such Love to the Church, why are you so mild and favourable, and gentle towards the Papists, who are as great Enemies to the State as to the Church? Why are you not for getting those Laws executed which are in force against Field and Street-Walkers, and those that haunt Ale-Houses and Taverns, and who are playing at Cards or Dice, when they should be at Church? And those who are rattling about in their Coaches, or other ways conveying themselves from one Place to another, on the Lord's-Day, and in Time of Divine Service, to perform some idle and sacrilegious Visits?

4. 4. The Methods you use are no way becoming the Church: They will never do the Church any Service: Force and Violence will never satisfy Mens Judgments: They will not extirpate those unjust Prejudices People have suckt in against our Church, but will rather confirm them. These Courses will not fairly remove Mens Scruples.

Suppose you should force many to come within the Doors of our Churches, by harsh and severe Proceedings; what is our Church the better for this? Can you, together with outward Compulsion, infuse into their Minds an affectionate Love to, and unfeigned Approbation of our Service and Worship? If not, you may make our Church fuller of Hypocrites than she was before, but not fuller of real and cordial Profelytes; you may turn the Places for our publick Worship into Prisons, if you please, but you cannot by these means make the Dissenters *a willing People in the Day of your Power.*

The Members of the Church must be Volunteers, and not Press'd Men: Such as are forced will never do acceptable Service: They will embrace the first Opportunity to relinquish and bespatter us.

It has hitherto been the certain Property and Character of Heterodox, Heretical, Popish, and Anti-Christian Churches and

Now if you would find Help and Relief from others, when destitute, afflicted, and persecuted, have some regard to, and let your Bowels yern over your persecuted Neighbours, in this their Day of Affliction. Nature, Religion, Christianity, all that is good and excellent, intreat and importune your Charity. Can you deny these Sufferers? Can you withhold any thing from Christ, imploring and beseeching your Commiseration in these his afflicted, persecuted Members? Can you eat and drink, and feast your selves, and be merry, and have no Concern for Christ's wandering, naked, indigent, distressed Servants and Followers? Ye that put far away the Evil Day, and cause the Seat of Violence to come near, that lie upon Beds of Ivory, and stretch themselves upon their Couches, and eat the Lambs out of the Flock, and the Calves out of the midst of the Stall, that chant to the Sound of the Viol, and invent to themselves Instruments of Musick like David, that drink Wine in Bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief Ointments, but they are not grieved for the Affliction of Joseph: Therefore now shall they go Captive, with the first that go Captive, and the Banquet of them that stretched themselves, shall be removed.

But that you may be more duely affected with their Condition, I will lay before you the same Account which is given of it, by the most impartial, learned, and celebrated Historian of this Age. The Account is this.

Those born in the Communion of the Church of Rome, are required not to change their Religion, which was left free before. Schools and Colleges are suppressed in most Places. The Churches which the Protestants had in the Country or small Towns, are generally raised, and all religious Meetings in private Houses are forbidden. The Synods and Colloquies of their Clergy are forbidden, except a Popish Commissioner is present, the singing of Psalms is prohibited. When they are sick, they are forced to admit the Popish Magistrates to come with Witnesses to exhort them to change their Religion. No Midwives are permitted to practise but Papists, that so they may baptise their Children, upon which it may be afterwards pretended, if they continue Protestants, that they are relapsed, because they were baptised by a Papist, and the Punishment of this is terrible. No Minister, Elder, or Deacon may go and visit their Flocks, to confirm them in their Religion, when they are wavering in it; Accusations are brought upon the slightest Pretences against the Ministers or others that are noted for their Zeal in the Cause of Religion; upon which, Orders for their Imprisonment are easily given out, and they are either forced to fly, or are ruined by a long Imprisonment. And the Intendants of the Provinces oppress them most unmercifully, with Design, as may be easily guessed, to drive them into a Rebellion, that so a Pretence may be given to

Amos vi. 3.
to the
8th. v.

Dr. Burnet's Pref. to his Hist. of the Rights of Princes in the disposing of Ecclesiastical Benefices, &c. p. 54. &c.
Vid. Present State of the Protestants in France, and the Policy of the Clergy of France to destroy the Protestants of that Kingdom.

ty, and was not made a Sacrifice to the Revenge of those who had lost their next Friends by his means.

It was Peace, and Love, and Mercy, and Condescension and Meekness, which brought Repute to this Church formerly, and adorned it in its most flourishing State: And why should you now change its ancient Methods, if your Love to it be the same, and your Zeal as regular as was that of our first and best Reformers?

4thly.

In the fourth Place, this discovers what ill Offices they do (whether they be of the Clergy, or in other Places of Power) who are continually exciting People to inform against all Dissenters, without making any Difference. Peoples Spirits are apparently over-heated already: They are cast into too violent a Ferment: And therefore, rather than use any means to exasperate their Passions more, we ought all in our Places, to do what we can to cool these Heats, and reduce Men to more calm and gentle Tempers. Especially should this be the Care and Study of them who pretend they have a Right to that Character, of being Ambassadors and Heralds of Peace. Your loud Declamations, your passionate and evenomed Instigations, and your sounding Alarms from the Pulpit against Dissenters in general, will not please, nor gratify, nor benefit any, but the sensual, debauch'd Part of your Auditors. This will endanger the creating ill Apprehensions of the Way you pretend to, in the Minds of the soberer and more harmless Sort. Such kind of Preaching will be interpreted, but like clapping your Hands, and lowing on the Dogs, which instead of bringing People into the Church, will be apt to drive them out of the Church-Yard. St. Paul directs us to a more Christian Method, and such an one as will, if generally, faithfully, and diligently observed (and we are qualified to make use of it) make Thousands of more real Profelytes to our Church, than common Informations, Fines, and other Punishments will make, 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

5thly.

This calls for your Prayers for, and your Commiseration and Pity, and what other Help and Assistance you are able to administer to them that are persecuted.

You have this Day heard that your Neighbour Protestants are in a very afflicted and calamitous Estate. This calls for Pity, your Prayers, your Help, and what Relief you can afford them.

You know not how soon your own Condition may be the same with theirs, if you will resolutely adhere to your Religion, and dare not deny Christ and his Gospel; you are at present safe, you enjoy the Protestant Religion peaceably, but you have no Assurance this prosperous and shining Day will continue long.

Now

destroy them all at once. No Protestants can be admitted to any Charge or Employment, how mean soever it be : nor may they be received to any Trading or Mechanical Corporation. And to take from them all Confidence, or Credit in Trade, if any Protestant Merchant turns Papist, he cannot be sued for his Accounts, or Debts, for three Years thereafter. And these Orders are much heavier in the manner in which they are executed.

Id. p. 59.

The present Proceedings in Poictu shew what the rest are to look for ; the Mercenary Agents of Mr. Pelisson prevailed so far on the Weaknesses and Necessities of many, as to draw them to abjure their Religion ; but not a few of these soon after repenting of that base Bargain, by which for a few Crowns they had sold their Souls, and openly expressing their Horror for it, were clapt in Prison, where they lie still in great Misery, only their Numbers are such, that it seems it is not thought fit to proceed to Extremities against so many at once.

Id. p. 62.

But the Intendant of that Province, Mr. De Marillac, whether directed by secret Orders, or set on by the Fierceness of his own Temper, or by his Confessors, is not known, is resolved to take a severe Revenge of the rest of that Religion, for the sake of those unhappy Relapses, and has treated them not as Peaceable and Obedient Subjects, but as open Rebels, and declared Enemies. Their Goods and their Houses are robbed, and their Persons violently assaulted, and all that is done by the Intendant's Order. The Soldiers under his Command are lodged only in the Houses of those of the Religion, where they do not only ruin their Hosts, by the excessive Charge they put them to, and by the Contributions they exact from them, but use all the Means they can think of to frighten them out of their Religion ; tho' the horrid Oaths and Blasphemies they break out daily in, are but ill Arguments to persuade Men to turn. If they refuse to go to Mass, they Cudgel them ; they drag the Women by the Hair of the Head, with Ropes about their Necks ; they torture some with their Screws ; they bind Men of eighty Years of Age, and abuse their Children before their Eyes. And such of the Soldiers as are not guilty of those Cruelties, yet spoil and rob their Goods, and sell them publicly ; they threaten them often with Death, if they will not change, having naked Swords in their Hands, or holding Pistols to their Breasts. And if all these Means are ineffectual, then they carry them in Sheets to Churches, and sling Holy Water on them, and tell them now they are made Catholicks, and if they return again to their Heresy, they threaten them they will accuse them as Relapsers. And when House-keepers are by these Means quite ruined, yet they must not give up their Houses tho' they can keep them no longer, but are Fined 500 Livres if they quit them. And that which has always been the Privilege of the Miserable, is now denied them ; for when they come to complain of these Violences to the Intendant, he, without hearing them, or observing the common Forms of Justice, sends them presently

presently to Prison, and keeps them still there, without framing any Process against them; and not content with all this, tho' it is scarce to be imagined what can come after it, or rise beyond it; when he heard that Complaints were made of these Outrages to the King, he sent upon that, his Officers to many of their Houses, to force them to Sign a Denial of the Truth of these Violences which they had suffered.

And that which aggravates their Misery, and therefore renders them more deserving of our Commiseration and Help, is, that they are a People who have done extraordinary Services for the Crown, and could never yet be charged with any undutiful Demeanour to the Government. And they have the same Rights and Privileges with the other Subjects, assured to them by as firm Edicts, and binding Laws, as any by which that Nation is govern'd: And yet purely on the Account of their Religion, without the Guilt or Charge of any Fault, and in direct Contradiction to those Laws which were made, and often confirmed for their Security, are they now persecuted to the Degree before-mentioned

This shews, that neither the best Services, the greatest Innocence, the highest Merits, nor the most sacred and solemn Tyes, Engagements or Laws can secure a Protestant People from being treated as the vilest Criminals and Rebels, when under the Power, Influence and Authority of a Popish, Biggotted Prince.

Which in the last Place calls us to prepare our selves for Persecution. What Clouds do hang over us? What Storms do threaten us? We are none of us ignorant of the Attempts which have been made, and are still carrying on, to supplant and overthrow the Protestant Religion, and to bring in Popery amongst us, as an overflowing Stream.

And that which greatly threatens our Loss of the Gospel, and those Ordinances we have long enjoyed, is both the great and general Increase of Wickedness and Debauchery amongst us, and that too many of those who have pretended to desire and endeavour our Security and Reformation, have set up for Atheism, or at least have declared themselves Enemies to the Scripture, the Deity of Christ, the publick Ministry, and all Ordinances. And it is not much different whether we have our Bibles, our Services, and publick Administrations in *Latin*, or whether we have none at all. These Things do witness against us, and unless we do throughout the Nation, set upon a serious and vigorous Reformation, we may expect our Candlestick will be removed; and that we shall either be strip'd of all our present Enjoyments, or at most but inherit the Name of them. And if

such

6thly.

such Days do come, then all *who will live Godly, must certainly suffer Persecution.*

Nor do I at all doubt, but if either Popery, or Atheism, or both, have in these Nations the Countenance and Encouragement of a Prince, the very same Men who are now violent against Protestants and pious People, will then with greater Fury persecute, oppress and destroy all that will either own and worship God, or approve themselves avowed Protestants.

Let us therefore study the Scripture diligently, be thoroughly informed in the Christian Faith, get our Hearts raised to an unconquerable Admiration and Love of the Blessed Jesus. Let us take heed of placing too much Confidence on a natural Resolution, or humane Strength. Let us learn to resign up our selves entirely unto Christ, and pray daily that we may not fear any of those Things which we shall suffer, but that we may be so strengthened and assisted by the Spirit of Grace, that we may approve our selves faithful unto Death. Thus we may attain to inherit a Crown of Glory, which God of his infinite Mercy bring every one of us unto, for the Merits Sake of Jesus Christ, our Blessed and only Saviour and Redeemer, to whom with the Father, &c.

A Brief

A Brief Relation of the Prosecutions against SAMUEL BOLDE, &c.

— They laid to my Charge Things that I knew not.
Psal. xxxv. 11.

Let my Mouth be filled with thy Praise and with thy Honour all the Day. Cast me not off in the Time of old Age, forsake me not when my Strength faileth. Psal. lxxi. 8, 9.

THE Turn and Course of Affairs in this Land in the Years 1687 and 1688, were such, as produced an almost universal Acknowledgment; that that sort of People, who were so vehemently offended with the *Sermon against Persecution*, and the *Plea for Moderation towards Dissenters*, which I published in the Year 1682, had been Popish Tools, and had done all that they were able to do (both by the Notions they had avowed to be their Principles, and by their violent Proceedings) to pave the way to the utter demolishing of the *Church of England*, and extirpating of the *Protestant Religion*. And if, either this Conviction had been as lasting, as it was then general, or the Enmity entertained and cherished against me, because of the Books above-named, had ceased with the Death of those who did actually interest themselves against me for publishing them, I would still have passed over the Methods used against me, in as profound Silence, as I have, to this Time. But since the *old Hatred* is to be continued, and the *risen Generation*, both Clergy and Laity, (who I am persuaded, know no more, but that they have heard that I was prosecuted both in the Ecclesiastical Court, and at the Assizes, and that Sentence was pass'd against me in both Courts) do manifest by their Talk, and by their Carriage, that they do believe the Proceedings against me were Justifiable, and very Right, I conceive, I ought, after so long Forbearance, to do my self so much Right, as to lay before the World a *plain Narrative* of the *Matters of Fact*, leaving all People to judge as they shall think fit.

The Time when, and the Occasions on which I preached and published my *Sermon against Persecution*, are related in the Title Page, and Preface before the Sermon, and the Reason why I published my *Plea for Moderation towards Dissenters*, is declared in the Title Page before it.

The next Affize after the *Sermon* was published, the Grand-Jury Presented me for that Sermon; I was afterwards indicted for it: The same Method was taken with respect to my *Plea for Moderation*, &c. At one Affize I traversed the Indictment for the Sermon, which was therefore to be tried the next Affize, viz. in the Spring following.

About the latter end of October next, after I had traversed the Indictment for my Sermon, I was cited to appear at the Bishop's Court. When I appeared there, Articles were exhibited against me for the *Sermon against Persecution*. A Copy of them being delivered to me, I was ordered to bring my *Personal Answer* to them in Writing the next Court-Day. This I did, and the same Day, *Additional Positions and Articles* were exhibited against me for the *Sermon against Persecution*, and the *Plea for Moderation*, &c. A Copy of these being delivered to me, I was required to give in my *Personal Answer* in Writing unto them, the next Court-Day. I gave in my Answer at the Time appointed, and I was ordered to appear there the next Court-Day, which was by Adjournment, (I think) the first Tuesday in March following.

The Crimes I am charged with in the Articles against the Sermon, and in the *Additional and Declaratory Positions*, both against the Sermon, and the *Plea for Moderation*, &c. are set forth and expressed in effect, as followeth:

" We Object and Article against you, That you, Samuel Boldé, Rector of Steeple, have writ, and preached; and published a scandalous Libel, intituled, *A Sermon against Persecution*, and another scandalous Libel, intituled, *A Plea for Moderation towards Dissenters*, with a malicious Mind, and wicked Intention, to derogate from and procure Contempt to the Ecclesiastical Laws, Statutes, Canons, Sanctions and Constitutions, as impious, corrupt, and superstitious, to the great Damage and Prejudice of all, and every one of the Reverend the Lords Bishops, Archdeacons, Officials, Ministers, Clerks, Church-Wardens, &c. We object also to you, That in the said Sermon, &c. there are many Things affirmed to the great and grievous Scandal and Prejudice of the Church of England, and to the great Dishonouring and Disgrace of its Rites and Ceremonies, and to the no small Scandal and Prejudice of all and every the Lords Bishops, Archdeacons, Officials, &c. by which, not only the Ecclesiastical State is very much injured, and the sincere Wor-

ship

“ ship of God is much hindered, but also all and every of
 “ the Lords the Bishops, Archdeacons, &c. are hindered
 “ and interrupted, and excluded from the Execution of
 “ their respective Offices. But especially there are in those
 “ Libels, Contumelious, Disparaging, Reproachful and
 “ Defamatory Words.

To prove me guilty of these Faults and Crimes, certain
 Sentences are produced in their own Way, out of my Ser-
 mon against Persecution, and out of my Plea for Modera-
 tion, &c.

1. That I have injured the Reverend, &c. they prove
 thus, “ You Samuel Bolde, &c. do say, Preface to Sermon,
 “ p. 1. *It may be some* (meaning, according to the genuine
 “ Sense of any indifferent Reader, the Magistrates that ex-
 “ ercise Ecclesiastical Discipline upon Criminals) *who pre-*
 “ *tend to be of the Church, will take Exception at this Sermon,*
 “ *for there are some* (meaning the Officers as aforesaid) *so*
 “ *shallow, and of so short Discourse, they cannot understand how*
 “ *a Man can except against their violent Dealing against some*
 “ *Dissenters* (meaning the Sectary-Dissenters from the Church
 “ of England) *and yet be himself a thorough Conformist. In-*
 “ *deed, it is not of any moment what such may either think or*
 “ *say, but yet to give them some Satisfaction, if they happen to*
 “ *be favoured with any lucid Intervals, I will, amongst many In-*
 “ *stances I might mention, offer these few to their Consideration.*
 “ (And thus you impured the Crime of wicked Ignorance,
 “ which is worse than Infirmary and Lunacy, to the Ma-
 “ gistrates.) In your Sermon, p. 6. you have said, *The Ser-*
 “ *vants of Satan. and Enemies of true Godliness* (meaning the
 “ Magistrates and Officials of Discipline) *have always been*
 “ *for persecuting the faithful and obedient Children of God*
 “ (meaning the Dissenters and Sectaries from the Church of
 “ England.)” To prove most clearly, that I have villified
 Magistrates, and have spoken much to hinder the Executi-
 on of Justice, and to the Encouragement of the Authors of
 all Iniquity and Unrighteousness, they tell me, “ there are
 “ these Words, p. 8. l. 45. *Are not the Persecutors and Infor-*
 “ *mers of our Days, like those that went before them? And*
 “ p. 10. l. 34. *They are commonly observed to be the worst and*
 “ *most brutish, and degenerate Part of Mankind; and l. 39.*
 “ *They are usually taken to be the very Pest of Society; it is al-*
 “ *most as dangerous to live amongst them, as amongst the wild*
 “ *and savage Beasts of the Desert; and p. 11. l. 18. They are*
 “ *usually the most fierce and barbarous of all People; and p. 28.*
 “ l. 10. *Can anything reflect more upon the Church, than to have*
 “ *those Men countenanced in persecuting others; who do themselves*
 “ *discover so little Love to God or Religion, and of whom no Good*
 “ *can be said by others; nay, who have nothing to say in their*

"own Vindication?" These Passages, it seems, were thought plain enough of themselves to prove the Charge against me, without the help of an Additional Meaning. In the 10th Page of my Sermon, I proposed to shew what kind of People Persecutors generally are: That 1. They are Men of a very superstitious, blind, and ignorant Zeal. 2. They are Men of insufferable Pride and Malice. 3. They are Men of desperate and broken Fortunes, p. 12. *They do commonly take up Informing, and Swearing, and Persecuting, as a Trade to live by.* These last Words are thus placed in the Articles, "*They* (meaning the most Reverend the Lord Arch-Bishop, the Reverend the Lords Bishops, Arch-Deacons, Commissaries, Officials, and other his Majesty's Officers and obedient Subjects, that put the aforesaid Laws, Statutes, Canons, and Constitutions against Dissenters in Execution) *do commonly take up Informing, and Swearing, and Persecuting, as a Trade to live by.* And in the same Page you say, *There are two Sorts of most abominable and wicked Ways Men have found out to maintain themselves, and feed their Lusts by: The one is Robbing on the High-way, and the other is Informing against and Persecuting the Righteous. Now those that apply to the latter Way, are the most infamous of the two, &c.*" In the same Page, shewing what kind of People Persecutors generally are, I say, *athly, They are extremely profligate and scandalous in their Lives.* These, with some following Words, are thus placed in the Articles: "*They* (meaning the Church-Wardens and Sidesmen, that are obliged by Oath to Present, according to the before-mentioned Canons and Constitutions) *are extremely profligate and scandalous in their Lives; Men that are very loose, profane, and every way debauch'd, such as are common Swearers, Drunkards, Whoremongers, and professed Enemies to every Thing that is serious, holy, and good, &c.* And in p 8, you say, *Are not the Informers and Persecutors of our Days, like unto those that were before them? Is it not evident to all, that they* (meaning the most Reverend the Lord Archbishop, the Reverend the Lords Bishops, Archdeacons, Commissaries, Officials, and other his Majesty's Officers and obedient Subjects, that put the said Laws, Statutes, Canons and Constitutions against Dissenters in Execution) *who*

appear

" appear most vigorous and active in prosecuting those Protestants
 " who differ from others in some accidental Matters, have a great
 " Affection for Popery, and are hastening towards Rome as fast
 " as they can. And p. 23. l. 24. you say, How ridiculous
 " and absurd is it to hear Men (meaning the Clergy, and
 " others conversant in Ecclesiastical Affairs and History)
 " talk very gravely at sometimes, that the Church hath no
 " Weapons but Tears and Prayers, and yet presently to see the same
 " Men using Rods and Swords, and Axes in the Church's behalf?
 " And p. 27. you say, The Prosecution of these Laws (meaning
 " the Laws, Statutes, Canons and Constitutions aforesaid)
 " hath been declared inconvenient and hurtful to the Protestant
 " Religion, by them who understand the Nature, the Tendency,
 " and the Obligation of these Laws, as well or better than any of
 " the violent and outrageous Prosecutors of them (meaning the
 " most Reverend Father in God the Lord Archbishop, the
 " Reverend the Lords Bishops, Archdeacons, Commissa-
 " ries, Officials and other his Majesty's Officers and Loy-
 " al and Obedient Subjects.) And tho' this cannot repeal or
 " make null the Laws, yet the Opinion of so Great, Honourable,
 " and August an Assembly (meaning the House of Commons,
 " Jan 10. 1680.) should have so much Influence as to check the
 " inordinate Zeal some (meaning the Church-Wardens and
 " Sidesmen) are too apt to lay out in their unnecessary Informa-
 " tions and Presentments. And p 32. This discovers what ill
 " Offices they do, whether they be of the Clergy, or in other
 " Places of Power (meaning the Reverend the Lords Bi-
 " shops, Archdeacons, Commissaries, Officials, and other
 " his Majesty's Officers, &c.) who are continually exciting
 " People to inform against all Dissenters, without making any
 " Difference. Your loud Declamations, your passionate and enve-
 " nom'd Instigations, and your sounding Alarms from the Pulpit
 " against Dissenters in general, will not please, nor gratify, nor
 " benefit any, but the sensual, debauch'd Part of your Auditors.
 " Such kind of Preaching will be interpreted but like clapping
 " your Hands and looting on the Dogs (meaning the Church-
 " Wardens and Sidesmen) which instead of bringing People
 " into the Church, will be apt to drive them out of the Church-
 " Yard

2. To prove what they accuse me of, with respect to the
 Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England, they produce
 the following Passage, in this manner: " In the 2d. page
 " of the Preface to your Sermon, you call the Rites and Ce-
 " remonies of the Church of England, Impositions, Inno-
 " vations and Fancies." The first and the third of these
 Epithets are, in the Preface, applied to particular Persons
 Opinions or Conceits concerning the Ceremonies; the se-
 cond Epithet was their own. " And p. 6, 7. of your Ser-
 mon,

Resol. of
 the House
 of Com-
 mons, Jan.
 10, 1680.

" mon, you call them Fopperies, trifling and worthless
 " Parts, Husks that starve Mens Souls. And in your Ser.
 " mon, p. 6. l. 31. you do there presumptuously deter-
 " mine, that the present Ceremonies of the Church of
 " England are imposed superstitiously as necessary, like
 " those that the Judaising Christians would have imposed
 " on the Heathen Converts, contrary to the Canons Ec-
 " clesiastical. And in your Plea, p. 1. you assert, That
 " Satan has engaged Pretenders to Christianity, to be extremely
 " zealous about unnecessary Ceremonies." This I own to be
 " true: But the foregoing Passage is literally false. " And
 " p. 2. That Excommunications, and the Censures of the Church
 " are now inflicted for Peoples not being implicitly and blindly
 " Obedient; and that if a Man were ever so pious, yet if
 " he would not pay every Groat they did unjustly demand, and
 " yield blind Obedience, he was forthwith given to the Devil."
 Their very Words here, may occasion a Suspicion, that
 they have not transcribed honestly. Whoever pleaseth to
 read the Page referred to, may see the Truth. " In your
 " Sermon, p. 6. you say, The Servants of Satan, and Ene-
 " mies of true Godliness, have always been for persecuting the
 " faithful and obedient Children of God. And it seems, by this
 " Epistle (to the Galatians) to be the especial and peculiar Cha-
 " racter of them that are irreligiously and immoderately hot
 " and zealous about Ceremonies (meaning the Ceremonies
 " of the Church of England) to be the greatest Persecutors
 " of those who are most Pious and Conscientious. Look through
 " all the Scriptures, nay look through all the Ages of the
 " Church, you shall generally find, that those who were most for
 " the Persecution of others on the Account of some Indifferences
 " relating to Religion, were very wicked, superstitious Men; Men
 " that were inordinately zealous for, and fond of some outward
 " Ceremonies (meaning the Ceremonies of the Church of
 " England.) Now, if a Fondness for any Ceremonies would main-
 " tain and justify Mens persecuting of others who cannot approve
 " their Fopperies, (still meaning the Ceremonies of the
 " Church of England) one would think these Teachers who were
 " crept in amongst the Galatians, should be excused, because they
 " press'd only those Things that had formerly been of Divine Ap-
 " pointment.

" In p. 26. you say, There are three Things generally
 " insisted on by Informers and Persecutors for their own
 " Vindication. They are these: 1. They say they do no
 " more than what the Law doth countenance them in.
 " 2. The Persons they prosecute, are dangerous, sediti-
 " ous, rebellious People. 3. What they do, is out of
 " Love to, and Zeal for the Church." All this is truly
 transcribed; and they might have some meaning in tran-
 scribing

scribing it; but what that was, or how these Words do criminally affect their Church Magistrates or Ceremonies, they have not declared.

3. They tell me, " I have undertaken to be a scandalous Advocate for, and Favourer of the Sectaries, in the following Words: *I must say that those of the Dissenters whom I have been acquainted with, have been Men of great Learning, exemplary Piety, strict Devotion, and extraordinary Loyalty.* And p. 10. l. 22. *whosoever goes about to disturb and ruin, and contract on such, Fines or Punishments, because they cannot comply with those supernumerary Conceits some do too much please themselves withal, and press with too much Warmth on others, are too liable to the Charge of Persecution.* You likewise do declare in your Plea, p. 14. l. 3. your Unsatisfiedness with the Use of the Ceremonies of the Church of England." The Words there be these: *There are several Arguments made use of to commend Conformity in these Things, and to prove the Lawfulness of them as now in Use; but they have not all that Force and Power on me, that some of them have.* " And in your Plea, p. 34. l. 36. you say, *Such as those undoubtedly are amongst them we call Dissenters. Nay, I am perswaded the Reverend Mr. Baxter, and Mr. Hickman, have given the World undeniable and very signal Evidences of their being Men of extraordinary Reading and Judgment: They are great Ornaments in their Generation, and very shining Lights in the Church of God. The Christian World will, no doubt, have a great Veneration for them as long as it shall endure. Future Ages will honour their Memory with all the Respect and Intimations of high Affection, sound Christianity will allow, when their inveterate, malicious Enemies shall have their Names continued, only to be used as a Proverbial Obloquy and Reproach.* (Whereas, by the Judgment and Decree of the whole Learned University of Oxford, against certain pernicious Books, and damnable Doctrines, destructive to all humane Society, several of the Propositions and Doctrines of your said Reverend Mr. Baxter were decreed and declared Seditious and Impious, and the several Books teaching them, were ordered to be publickly burnt by the Hand of the Marshal in the Court of the Schools there; and in pursuance of the said Decree, the said Mr. Baxter's impious Books were burnt accordingly.) And in your Sermon p. 19, you do there (by Application) assign all the Promises made to the persecuted in the Gospel, to the said Dissenters to the Church of England, and all the Execrations, to their Opposers, and consequently, either herd your self amongst the said Dissenters, or too nighly (if not to your self) reflect these Curses." Those who please may read the Page

referred to, and see if they can find any thing there to justify what is here affirmed. But to me their Assertion is perfect Gibberish.

4. In the last Place, " They Article against me, That being destitute of all Orthodox Learning or Doctrine, I have denounced the Lawful Prosecution against Criminals condemned by the Common Law, Ecclesiastical Canons and Statutes of this Kingdom, rightly, duly, lawfully, and solemnly enacted and established by the the Ignominious and Unchristian Character of Persecution; whereas in truth there never was any such Thing practised in the Church of *England*, or Kingdom of *England*, but in the very late Rebellion and Insurrection of the Sect of *Presbyterians*, and other Upstart Sectaries and Schismatics, Strangers to our *English* Church and to its Doctrines. *Doctrinibusque ejusdem*, be the Words in the Article. And first, We object to you, your false Definition of Persecution." I had said, Persecution is an endeavouring to trouble, molest, disturb, kill, or any way hurt and injure another Person on some religious Account; but they were pleased to fix on a piece of a Sentence, which they place thus; p. 9. l. ult. "Persecution is, ——— *When Men will not suffer others to enjoy that Liberty, and those Rights in Religion, which, either Nature or Revelation do allow them.*" This they attempt to confute both with their Learning and Railery. " You have ignorantly and impudently written and determined, Sermon. p. 6. l. 31. that the three Ceremonies of the Church of *England* are imposed like those the Judaizing Christians put upon Heathen Converts." The Words in the Sermon, p. 6. l. 31. are these: *It seems by this Epistle (to the Galatians) to be the especial and peculiar Character of them that are irreligiously and immoderately hot and zealous about Ceremonies, to be the greatest Persecutors of those who are most Pious and Conscientious.* " And you do likewise, and very falsely, nominate and term the Magistrates and other Ministers of Justice, with the ignominious Name of Persecutors and Ruiners of Men for little Indifferences; whereas Dissenters are but disciplined for denial of Obedience to the Laws that religiously enjoin them." This being the Article in which they have discovered their profound Learning, their Orthodox Doctrine, and their great Wit, I will transcribe it exactly as it is in the Copy delivered to me in the Court, that the Reader may enjoy it in all its Beauties.

" *Item tibi ob'mus & ar'mus, Quod tu presatus Samuel Bolde, per quam ignoranter & illiteratè o'niq; orthodoxa Doctrina ablata, vel tibi negligenter incognita prosecutionem legitimam,*

" *confuta*

"contra criminales adjudicatos (lege Co'i, Canonibus Ecclesiasticis Statutisq; hujus Regni Angliæ rectè, ritè l'time & solè'niter institutis & stabilitis) ignominia & in Christiana stigmatè, persecutionis denunciavisti & publicasti, cum revera numquam tale erat publicatum, vel practicum in Ecclesia Anglicana vel Regno Angliæ sed nuperima Rebellionè & Insurrectione Secti Presbyterianorum impuberum aliorumq; Sectorum & Schismaticorum, Ecclesiæ nostræ Anglicanæ Doctrinibusq; ejusdem penitus alienorum. Et imprimis tibi ob'mus Falsam tuam definitionem Persecutionis. p. 9. l. ult. Persecution is, when Men will not suffer others to enjoy that Liberty, and those Rights in Religion, which Nature and Revelation do allow them. Cum natura Lex mutatur secundum Subjectum; Hominesq; Naturalis extravagantes per teipsum partim (ut permittitur) videntur, & Sermonè v'ra, p. 6. l. 31. Consilii ignorantia & impudentia, scripsisti determinasti. "That the three Ceremonies of the Church of England are impos'd like those of the Judaizing Christians put upon Heathen Converts." [Here let me observe, that those are not my Words. My Words, p. 6. l. 31. are these: *It seems by this Epistle (to the Galatians) to be the especial and peculiar Character of them that are irreligiously and immoderately hot and zealous about Ceremonies, to be the greatest Persecutors of those who are most Pious and Conscientious.*] "And you do likewise, and very falsely nominate and term the Magistrates and other Ministers of Justice, with the ignominious Name of Persecutors and Ruiners of Men for little Indifferences. Whereas Dissenters are not punish'd for committing or omitting Things indifferent; but are disciplin'd, for Denial of Obedience to the Laws that religiously enjoins them, and to which you and all the Subjects of England have assented. Which kind of Discipline hath been exercised even in most of the Presbyterian and Independant pretended Churches Notwithstanding all which, and the Premises, in your Sermon, p. 22 l. 16. you say, To execute the Law, is against Christian Religion." So ends this Learned, Instructive, Ingenious Article. But, whatever Perfections those who compos'd this Article, might think they had lodged in it, they took effectual Care it should not be loaded with that, which to one Gang of People is most offensive, viz. Truth. Of this, the Words with which the Article concludes, are a glaring Instance. I had said, Supposing it could not properly be called Persecution, to prosecute and be severe with People about those Things, which you are satisfied in your Minds, God hath not concern'd himself about, either by commanding or forbidding them; yet your ruining, or making others suffer extremely for these Things, whilst they have other Apprehensions, either of the Nature or Use of them, still unavoidably

looks too like Persecution (I think) for a serious compassionate Christian to tolerate himself in : This seems not to have any of that Meekness, Condescension, and Forbearance, our Religion doth so expressly and so vehemently enforce. The last Sentence are my Words, p 22 l. 16. Whereas they affirm, I do there say, " to execute the Law, is against Christian Religion.

My Answer to the Articles, &c. being said to be worse than the Books, the Bishop thought fit to determine, that all was fully proved against me, and with the Advice or Counsel of his Learned Clergymen, given under their Hands, &c. proceeded to his definitive Sentence, or final Decree, which was, that I should preach three Recantation Sermons, one in the Parish Church of *Dorchester*, one in the Parish Church of *Blandford*, one in the Parish Church of *Shaftsbury*, on three Lords-Days in the Forenoon, before *Easter* ; and that Copies of the Sermons should be given to him, to be approved by him before they were preached ; and that if I should refuse to make such Recantation, I should be suspended from the Office and Benefice of my Parochial Church of *Steeple*, and Rectory of the same, and afterwards be deprived of them, and be further proceeded against according the Laws, Canons, and Ecclesiastical Constitutions of this Kingdom of *England* ; and that I should pay the Expences of *Andrew Cosen*, the Promoter, as taxed by the Bishop. This *Andrew Cosen* is stiled by the Bishop, a Gentleman. This is certain, he was the Bishop's Butler.

On *Thursday* Evening, in the Week after the Bishop had pronounced his definitive Sentence against me, the Judges came to *Dorchester*. On *Friday* in the Forenoon two Indictments against me were tried. One was for my *Plea for Moderation towards Dissenters*. The other was for a Letter : The Indictment for the *Plea for Moderation*, &c. was quash'd by Reason of a Fault found in the Form of it. Which Fault the Judge ordered to be corrected, and the Indictment to be brought in again in the Afternoon. The other Indictment was for a Letter. The Matter, in short, was thus : An Apothecary in *Blandford* had been prosecuted (upon an Information against him, as something he had done as a Dissenter) at the Sessions, and was obliged to pay twenty Pounds. About six or seven Weeks after, I saw the said Apothecary come into a Church on a Lord's Day in the Forenoon, before the Absolution was read. He staid there till the whole Service was ended : I saw him in the same Church in the Afternoon of the same Day, before Afternoon Service began, where he continued till the Congregation was regularly dismissed. Some Weeks after this, I was told by one of *Blandford*, the Adversaries of the

aforesaid Apothecary, did design to prosecute him for three

Months

Months Absence from Church; and that many of his Acquaintance perswaded him to endeavour to compound with his Adversaries, rather than stand a Trial, considering how Things had been managed not long since at the Sessions I desired that Person to tell him from me, that he being now under the Protection of the Law, he ought not, in my Judgment, to follow the Advice above-mentioned: For, to my certain Knowledge, a whole Parish could witness he had been at Church within three Months. The next Week I had occasion to write to the aforesaid Apothecary, to send me some Things he sold, and betwixt my subscribing my Letter, and sealing it, the Report I have already mentioned came into my Mind. This occasioned my Writing under my Letter these Words: *Be sure you do not stoop too, nor be afraid of the Tories, but approve your self a resolute, faithful Protestant. Honest Protestants will not always be under a Cloud.* This Letter was afterwards in the Hand of one commonly called Captain W—— (I write not his Name at length, he is dead, and his Son hath writ with much Learning, mighty Strength of Argument, and great Vivacity of Spirit, both against Popery and Bigottry. He is now highly exalted) and was improved into an Indictment against me. The Words in the Letter were placed in the Indictment in this manner, "*Be sure you do not stoop to, nor be afraid of the Tories* (meaning the good and faithful Subjects of our Lord the King, so called scandalously and contemptuously by Persons disaffected to the present Government of this Kingdom of England,) *approve your self a resolute and faithful Protestant* (meaning in Truth a disaffected Person to the present Government.) *Honest Protestants* (meaning disaffected Persons as before-said) *will not be always under a Cloud.*

The Jury went forth, and after a short stay, returning, declared they found me guilty of the Book. But the Judge telling them they were not sent out upon the Book, but the Letter, Answer was made, *Of the Letter*; which Answer served the Turn, as effectually as if it had been given at first.

At Night, the rectified Indictment for the *Plea for Moderation*, &c. was brought in and read, and an Indictment against me for the *Sermon against Persecution* was also read.

In the Indictment against me for the *Plea for Moderation*, &c. to prove me guilty of Sedition, &c. were inserted out of p. 21. these Words, *There ought not any thing to be universally required of all Men in the Service of God, but what has either an equal agreeableness to all Mens Tempers, or a direct and certain Tendency to advance the Interest of Religion, more or less in all Men. For some Instances which are proper to excite and quicken*

quicken Devotion in some Mens Breasts, have not the like Tendency in reference to others. And the Goodness of the End, will not justify an universal Impulse till you can first of all make all Men of one Complexion.

The Indictment against me for the Sermon against Persecution, charged me with Sedition, &c. but not any Words in the Sermon were inserted in the Indictment. To make up that Defect, the Sermon was tacked to the Indictment.

The Judge having set a Fine on me, for every one of the Indictments, the Goaler was ordered to take me into his Custody, and to keep me in Prison till the Fines should be paid.

The Monday following, the Apparitor, with the Promoter, came to the Prison, and cited me, in the Bishop's Name, to appear at his Court the next Day, certifying me, if I did not appear there, I should be proceeded against for Contempt. But I having appealed to an higher Court, for one the next Day, who executed the Orders of that higher Court, on the inferior Officers in their own Court. Thus, the Bishop's definitive Sentence, and final Decree, with the former Proceedings were vacated. Before the next Court Day came, the Bishop was dead.

When I had continued about seven Weeks in Prison, the Fines set on me by the Judge being paid, I departed from the Prison, and returned to *Steeple*.

But the Promoter being alive, the Appeal was to be followed: Those who had principally concerned themselves against me, expressing a Falshood of Assurance, that they should have certain Success above. The Proceedings in the Bishop's Court were transmitted. Yet before those who interested themselves against me, could begin their Prosecution above, the Promoter fell sick, and died. And thus ended the Ecclesiastical Prosecutions against me. And here, I do own, I esteem my being indicted, and suffering for my Sermon against Persecution, and for my Plea for Moderation, and more particularly for my perswading a Person in those Evil Days, to approve himself a sincere Protestant, a much greater Honour than any Worldly Preferment.

I could mention several Instances of Treatment I experienced from those who concerned themselves against me on the afore-mentioned Accounts, which were not attended with any Marks of Civility or good Nature; but the Persons are dead, and I am willing their Works should die with them. They had the Pleasure to give vent to the Inclinations and Passions which had the Ascendant over them. And I heartily bless God, I then had, and still have this Satisfaction, that neither their Number, nor their Power, did terrify me into any wicked or cowardly Compliance. They, after all their Efforts, left me where they found me, and there, through the great Patience and Goodness of God, I am at this Time.

Steeple, May
26. 1720.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 9. l. ult. for Prosecution read Persecution. Page 12. l. 21. read envenomed. Page 34. l. 24. after that read (.) and after Order, read (.) ; Page 39. l. 45. for 10, read 27.